

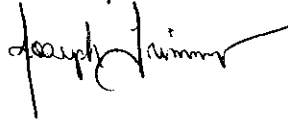
Skirts

An Honors Thesis (HONORS 499)

by

Mickie Reuster

Thesis Advisor
Dr. Joseph Trimmer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph Trimmer", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana

April 15, 1992

Graduation Date
May 3, 1992

Patricia Willright	president
Marcie	Skirt reporter
Jennifer	treasurer/head of bake sale
Sherry	group spray painter
Christine	resists Patricia's dress code
Roxanne	Patricia's right hand man
Guard 1	
Guard 2	

THE PLACES

The Senate	legislation buildings located down town
Park	located across from the Senate
"The Morning Star"	city newspaper located down town
Church	the Skirt meeting hall and office operate out of the church's basement
VFW Hall	initial meeting place for ERA Today
Warehouse	houses Larry's contraband and becomes ERA Today's hideout
The Jungle Bar	an alternative bar owned by Freddy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this thesis is to simply investigate and develop my writing technique for the screen.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank-you Dr. Trimmer

Skirts

Mickie Reuster

EXT - PARK - SUMMER DAY

A podium stands on an assembled stage where speaker ALYSHA THOMAS, 30's, poised confidently and wearing business attire, delivers her speech. Behind her stands two women wearing black monkey suits, handguns strapped to their right legs, and combat boots. A scarlet "S" sign is embroidered on the left breast pockets of the uniforms. MABEL, late 40's, has graying hair pulled back in a bun and wears dark shades too large for her face. The other, BETSY, 30's, is a muscular woman with dark short hair. The two women hold a banner by poles. The banner has "ERA TODAY" printed across it. A crowd of about one hundred, predominantly women, listen to the speaker and hold signs of positive and negative support for abortion. Across the street from the park is the state legislature buildings. Standing at the front of the crowd, SANDY, 30's, dressed in pants and a blazer, scratches notes in a stenopad.

ALYSHA

(speaking clearly and slowly)

If this bill outlawing abortion in this state is passed, women will be denied a freedom, a basic right. Our fates will fall into the hands of the legislature, a dominantly male legislature. It will give men control. It will say we submit. That we give up. It will say that we don't care what happens. Well, I'm here to say that we should care.

The crowd reacts in applause and cheers. As the supporters quiet, voices of opposition are heard. Sandy surveys the crowd and then notices that Betsy's and Mabel's attention has turned to the street.

ALYSHA

Pro-choice does not mean pro-abortion. It means you're pro-woman. This is not about abortion. This is about control. Do you want the government controlling your life? Is this in your best interest? No. No. No, I say.

The crowd reacts in agreement, chanting and waving signs.

EXT - STREET BETWEEN THE PARK AND LEG. BUILDINGS - SAME DAY

Two brown station wagons, late 70's models, stop quickly in the street alongside the demonstration.

EXT - PARK

ALYSHA

(raising her fist, speaking animatedly)

No. No, I say. The government is not to say what's good for you or what's good for me. We can't let them be in control.

INT - REAR STATION WAGON

PATRICIA WILLRIGHT, 40's, wearing a plaid pleated knee length skirt, knee socks pulled all the way up, white blouse, saddle shoes, with hair pulled back, and black granny glasses sitting on her nose, sits in the front passenger seat sighting a rifle on Alysha. ROXANNE, dressed similarly, sits behind the wheel looking out the rear view mirror.

PATRICIA
(overly maternal tone)
We're getting her just in time. Look how many people came to see the Homewrecker.

EXT - PARK

(voice over) Sandy looks to the station wagons and then back to the agitated Betsy and Mabel.

ALYSHA
Now I ask you this, are we going to let them control our lives? No, I say.

A shot rings through the crowd and Alysha is shot. She falls over the podium, dead. Betsy jumps to Alysha, to shield further fire. Sandy pushes forward through the chanting crowd and looks to the street. Mabel jumps off the podium, runs to the street and shoots at the second station wagon.

EXT - STREET

The rear window of the second wagon shatters as the two station wagons speed down the street.

INT - HENDERSON'S OFFICE - NEXT MORNING

The bustle of the general reporters' office is seen through the glass windows of the office and the noise of computers, telephones, and reporters penetrate the office. HENDERSON, 50's, dressed in a cheap suit with a cigarette between his fingers sits at a large wooden desk cluttered with paperwork. An ash tray heaped with cigarette butts and ashes is placed within his reach. Framed front pages of "The Morning Star" hang on the wall behind him. Sandy sits on the leather chair opposite the desk.

HENDERSON
(exhales smoke through his nose, pointing with his cigarette)
Unprofessional. "The Morning Star" doesn't print this bunk. So you can imagine my delight in finding your tabloid bullshit on my front page. Who let this through?

SANDY
(remaining composed)

Samuels.

HENDERSON

(exploding)

Samuels. Why the hell I ever leave him in charge, I'll never know. It won't happen again, I promise you that. (reading headline from paper off his desk) "Anti-Fem Underground Strikes Rally" What the hell kind of headline is that? Sounds like a fucking conspiracy. And what about this quote, "retaliation can be expected." Who is this goof ball?

SANDY

(fidgeting in chair, attempting to remain calm)

Penny Pinkerton, newly appointed head of ERA Today.

HENDERSON

(mocking her)

Penny Pinkerton. What a name. She's going to form some task force, huh? Organize women to retaliate. Sit around and gripe about men is more like it. That's all you women do. I swear you get your kicks outta pestering us. You say you want equal rights and our jobs. You want to bug us every second of the day. Can't get enough at home, huh? I come to work just to escape my old lady and now I've got you writing fairy tales about station wagons.

SANDY

(leans forward in chair)

I was there. I saw the station wagons, heard the shot, and saw Alysha Thomas fall dead over that podium. That's what I reported. The stuff about the Anti-Fems was from Pinkerton. It's properly attributed. The story's legit.

HENDERSON

(pounding his cigarette into the ashtray spilling butts and ashes) Legit. Get off it honey. Women don't go around killing each other because of a lousy bill. And to form an army? Please. You don't have the strength or the know-how.

SANDY

(rises, looking him in the eye)

There's a story here and I'm going to get it.

HENDERSON

(rises, puts his face in hers)

No you won't. I've had enough of this crap. Samuels is a moron.

From now on, I read all of your stories before they print, starting with the provocative story about the rise of graffiti on government buildings. If there's one word about station wagons, armed women, or that Pinkerton bitch, you're busted to the obituaries. Got it.

SANDY

(measures him with her eyes, speaks deliberately)
Incompetent, but not deaf. (walks to door, composed)

HENDERSON

(lights a cigarette, smiling at her comment)
Get the hell outta here.

INT - GENERAL REPORTERS' OFFICE - SAME DAY

The large open office area has many desks paired together, each with a computer terminal and most heaped with paperwork. People move about at their work. Printers run, phones ring. Sandy makes her way through the office, talking to herself.

SANDY

Why do I work for this asshole? Because he's the editor for the only decent paper in town. Dad's gotta be laughing now. (mimicking her father) You don't want to be a reporter, sweetheart. Everybody'll stomp on you, and you won't make any money. Well laugh away, Dad. Glad to please you. I think I'll call him and say "Dad, you were right. They all think I'm a loon." That'd please him.

RICK, 30's, wearing tight tan polyester pants, button down shirt open at the chest, gold chain, and hair slicked back, sits with his legs up on a moderately cluttered desk. A picture of his wife, styrofoam coffee cups, and empty food containers litter his work area. Flipping through a car brochure, he notices Sandy and rolls his chair into the aisle, blocking her passage.

RICK

Hey Sandy, need your opinion.

SANDY

(stops abruptly, hoping he hasn't noticed her talking to herself)
My opinion on what?

RICK

(showing her the pictures)
Which do you think my wife would want? This one? (turns the page to a station wagon, smiling) Or something roomier, like this one? No. Really. I thought you really blew the lid off women's issues, not to mention revolutionary car uses.

SANDY
(pushes past Rick)
You're as bad as Henderson.

RICK
(laughing)
No. Really. I'm not sure I should buy her another wagon. Not that she can even hold a gun.

SANDY
(turns back to him)
You'd really make my father happy.

RICK
(calling to her)
Is that a proposal, doll?

SANDY
(walks towards an office door)
This is what it comes down to. They're going to drive me over the edge. And it'll be in a station wagon.

INT - CHELSEY'S OFFICE - SAME DAY

A large fern sits on the filing cabinet by the window. A leather couch is against the wall across from a neatly cluttered desk where a computer terminal sits. Several lit candles are balanced on the stacks of paper on the desk, and sit on the terminal. Inspirational posters with existential sayings hang on the walls along with yellowing newspaper clippings, magazine pictures of animals, and poetry scribbled on crumpled paper. CHELSEY, 30's, has wild curly hair and wears gaudy 70's flowered skirt and blouse.

CHELSEY
(verbalizing as she types)
By letting your child sleep in the doghouse, you're saying, "I understand your plight. I want you to be an individual." Of course this does not mean that you should think of your dog as a surrogate child.

Sandy enters without knocking, still talking to herself and flops on the couch.

SANDY
No. I won't call him. I'll wait until he calls me.

CHELSEY
(finishes typing and lights a Camels cigarette)
You know, Freddy's going through the same sort of phase. He's building this tree house contraption in the back yard. He wants to

move our bed out there, (dramatically) "so we can sleep on a bed of leaves" as he likes to call it. I admit it sounds a little interesting, but I hate those little caterpillars. (shrugs shoulders) I can just feel them crawling in my ears while I'm sleeping.

SANDY

(breaking into Chelsey's ramblings)
Henderson saw my story this morning. He won't let me go any farther with it.

CHELSEY

(listens intently, responds seriously)
I thought it was a well written piece... except for the station wagons. Nobody would use a station wagon for a get-away car. They don't have any pick-up, (shaking her head knowledgeably) and they don't corner well either.

Frustrated, Sandy gets up and looks out the window.

EXT - "THE MORNING STAR" BUILDING - SAME DAY

From the third story window facing a side street, SHERRY, dressed in plaid skirt, knee socks, and saddle shoes walks towards a brown station wagon. She carries a can of spray paint half concealed in her purse.

INT - CHELSEY'S OFFICE

SANDY

Well, that's what I saw. Just a plain old station wagon. The ugly ones you can see anywhere. (points out the window) Like that one down there.

CHELSEY

(thoughtfully inhaling from her cigarette)
Maybe a station wagon would be a good get-away car. There's all that room and it seats what, five, maybe six?

SANDY

(turns from the window)
The station wagon's not the point. Henderson cut my story because he thinks it's a joke. Like I'd want to play games with him. He gave me another story just to see if I'd follow orders. Said he'll bust me to the obituaries if I don't.

CHELSEY

(nods seriously)
He always makes a point of following through with his ultimatums.

It's some sort of pride thing with him. You know Wally, the guy who washes the windows?

SANDY

(irritated)

Oh, I'll play his game and do his stupid little assignment. But I'm not giving up on this one. I'm just not sure where to start.

CHELSEY

(leaning on her desk with her elbows, playing with her hair)

What about that Pinkerton chick you interviewed? She's in charge, isn't she?

SANDY

(walking back toward Chelsey)

I don't know about her. I think getting into office after Thomas was killed made her paranoid. She kept saying, "They were after her," and that, "It wasn't safe anymore."

CHELSEY

(becoming interested)

They being whom?

SANDY

She really didn't say. Just kept looking out the windows and listening at the door. We talked for a couple minutes and then she froze and said, "I've said too much." Then she opened the window and climbed down the fire escape.

CHELSEY

(shocked at the coincidence)

You know, Freddy's been doing that a lot lately, too. He's working on this series of poems about monkey-ness as he calls it. He says that if he uses climbing as a mode of transportation, he can more truly relate to the essence of the monkey. What do you think? Is this just another one of his trips?

SANDY

(realizes she can't get any advise from Chelsey and submits to her conversation)

Knowing Freddy, he really believes it. But I don't think you have to worry. Freddy can't get much hairier than he already is.

INT - VFW HALL - SAME DAY

The large meeting hall has dull brown paneling and a tile floor. A stage, partitioned from the meeting area by a blue velvety curtain, stands at the far end of the room.

There are few windows and the room is tinted yellow by its fluorescent lighting. A large American flag and a Veterans of Foreign Wars flag are mounted on opposite sides of the stage. A hand made flag from a white sheet tied to a pole stands in the middle of the two flags. A large scarlet "♀" sign has been spray painted on the sheet. Long, brown, institutional tables surrounded by folding chairs fill the floor space. PENNY PINKERTON, 30's, dressed in black uniform with scarlet "♀" sign on breast pocket, combat boots, and handgun strapped to her right leg, stands at the head of a table located near the stage. The flags hang behind her. Mabel and Betsy, also in uniform, sit opposite each other at the end closest to Penny. The remaining ten women sit around the table in casual wear. Some hold young children. Penny paces before the women, hands behind her back, as if addressing the troops.

PENNY

They are out there. I've said this before. Perhaps now you will listen. The Skirt force is strong and they're organized. You can see now why I worked so hard to establish the Guard. (nods to Betsy and Mabel)

Betsy looks stoically forward and Mabel nods her head happily in agreement, causing her oversized shades to bobble on her nose.

PENNY

(righteously)

If more of you would have listened to me before, maybe Alysha would be here today.

WOMAN WITH CHILD

(dressed in slacks, blouse, and holds a toddler in her lap)

This is crazy. Alysha's death doesn't justify your storm troopers. We didn't support your crackpot ideas before. Just because you appointed yourself doesn't mean we'll support them now.

The women mumble comments to themselves, fearful of Penny hearing them.

PENNY

So you want to be a martyr just like Alysha? Look where her little pacifist scheme got her. Look what they did to her. This is a revolution. You think they will stop now that she's dead? No way. They're not sitting around crying over a little blood. They're taking action. They're out there right now, waiting for us.

MABEL

(pounding her fist on the table, speaking in a squeaky voice)

Here. Here. May the Skirts' blood fall like a thousand water falls.

SHARON

(dressed in skirt and blouse, supports a child with one hand and holds a Mickey Mouse doll in the other)
You're so gross.

The women more willingly voice their remarks.

PENNY

(addressing the women directly, hands behind her back)
We need to engage in a little basic training if we are going to win this war.

The women fidget in their seats, uncomfortable with the proposal.

MABEL

(flexes)
Yeah, even I could use a little workout.

LETTICIA

Oh no. No running. I don't run. It makes me puke.

SHARON

(condescendingly)
We're not here for aerobics, Penny. We came together to do something about the abortion bill, the one that'll be passed Friday if we don't do something about it.

PENNY

(enraged)
And what are you going to do to stop it, Sharon?
Walk around with signs and sing? I'm sure those Senators will throw open their windows and say, "Wait, they don't want this bill. I better not vote for it." No. They do what they need to to stay in office. And I don't think that includes listening to disheveled housewives chanting about women's rights. We have to get their attention. Action gets attention. We stir up the whiners on the front lawn, and they'll see we mean business.

The women are silent.

SHARON

(juggling the child and the doll)
Stir them up how?

PENNY

(standing with legs apart, hands behind back, head uplifted)

We don't want the bill passed.' The Skirts do. To show them who's got the strongest voice, I suggest we remove the competition.

MABEL
(flexing in agreement)
Yeah, Baby.

PENNY
(speaking slowly and deliberately)
So Friday afternoon before the vote, when everyone will be parading before the Senate, especially those Skirts, we make the Senators open their windows and listen.

MANDY
How?

PENNY
(pulling her gun from its holster, holding with both hands, aims down the table)
By cutting down the Skirts?

The women move in their seats voicing disbelief and uncertainty in Penny.

WOMAN WITH CHILD
(gathering her child and his coloring book, gets up to leave)
You're a real crackpot. You're too weird for me.

A few women remain silent, unsure of Penny's seriousness.

MANDY
There's no reason for this. What will it prove?

LETTICIA
How about Alysha? Is that a good enough reason?

MABEL
(reveling in the proposal of violence, takes her gun out of the holster and twirls on her finger)
Whew. Yeah. How about it Betsy? This is what we've been waiting for.

Betsy remains stoically staring forward.

MABEL
We'll smash 'em in the dust. They took one of ours and we take all of theirs. Sounds about fair to me.

LETTICIA

Those Skirts are so fond of quoting the Bible. How about an eye for an eye?

Mabel growls in her squeaky little voice as approval to Letticia's comment.

EXT - GOVERNMENT BUILDING - SAME DAY

The walls of the building are marked with spray painted graffiti. Scarlet "♀" signs are the most prominent. Warnings to the Skirts such as "Your Skirts Will Fall," "Nobody Likes a Skirt," "Plaid Sucks," "Plaid is for Pansies," and "Only Dead Women Wear Plaid" also appear in scarlet paint and scrawled in huge writing. The Skirts' responses are more neatly printed in black paint: "God Sees All Women in Skirts," "Homewreckers Will Feel the Wrath," and "Plaid is For Everyone." A JANITOR, dressed in blue work uniform, holding a bucket of cleaning supplies, talks to Sandy.

JANITOR

(in a friendly tone)

Last time graffiti was this bad was when the gangs used to run around here. I used to clean these walls every other day, it seemed. But that was a while back.

Sandy copies the graffiti in her stenopad making the "♀" sign dark by retracing it several time. She then points to the "♀" sign on the wall.

SANDY

Do you know what gang this sign comes from?

JANITOR

Now hold on there. I didn't say these marks were from gangs. I can't say where there from. I've never seen them before.

EXT - STREET ALONGSIDE THE GOVERNMENT BUILDING - SAME DAY

A brown, late 70's model station wagon with sheet plastic taped to the back window stops in the street alongside the building. A telephoto lens pokes out the passenger window at Sandy.

EXT - GOVERNMENT BUILDING

JANITOR

You know, it's not so easy to get spray paint off a building. I practically have to scrape the wall away. And I have other work to do too, you know. I don't have time to spend all day on this stuff.

EXT - STREET ALONGSIDE THE GOVERNMENT BUILDING

Sherry, dressed in plaid skirt, knee socks, white blouse and saddle shoes, squats in

the street between the station wagon and Sandy's white Tempo parked at the curb. Holding a can of black spray paint, she carefully finishes a "♀" sign on the driver's door of the Tempo.

EXT - GOVERNMENT BUILDING

(voice over) Sandy closes her stenopad, uninterested. She smiles politely, not wanting to cut the janitor short, and lets him talk on as she looks around the building and then to the street.

JANITOR

(babbling on, not noticing Sandy is leaving)
After all, the tax payers money goes to make sure I keep the inside of this building clean too.

Sandy walks cautiously and curiously toward the station wagon.

INT - STATION WAGON IN THE STREET

Roxanne slides behind the wheel as the similarly dressed Patricia focuses the camera on Sandy.

PATRICIA

(snaps a picture of Sandy as she looks towards the street, responding in a vicious snarl)
Gotcha, Homewrecker.

EXT - STREET ALONGSIDE THE GOVERNMENT BUILDING

The station wagon speeds away and Patricia's evil laughter trails after it. Sandy runs to her white Tempo. She notices the graffiti.

SANDY

I've been hit.

Sandy starts her car and chases after the station wagon which is several blocks ahead. Traffic flow is light and she speeds forward, gaining on the wagon. The station wagon begins turning at almost every block, cornering widely with its speed. As Sandy turns a corner chasing after the wagon, thirteen women dressed in plaid skirts, knee socks, white blouses and saddle shoes, the Skirts, walk into the street. Sandy slams on the brakes to avoid hitting them. The women continue calmly across the street in single file, not acknowledging the near accident. They carry signs of support for the abortion bill such as "Abortion Kills," "Save the Children," and "Women for Life." The station wagon turns down another block and drives out of sight.

INT - SANDY'S CAR

SANDY

(watches the station wagon turn off, notices the protesters, and

honks her horn at them)
What is this? Some revival of the 70's? (amazed) They're all dressed like Cindy Brady.

EXT - STREET

The women walk slower in response to the horn.

SKIRTS

(chanting)
Do not kill, pass the bill, Do not kill, pass the bill ...

SANDY

(leaning out the already open window, screaming)
Move along you mutant Cindy's. The 70's are dead. (as an after-thought) And plaid is ugly.

The line of Skirts clears the road to the opposite sidewalk and Sandy continues after the station wagon. Sandy turns down the block where she last saw it turn and then moves through the residential streets, looking for a glimpse of the wagon. Giving up, she parks alongside a quiet park and gets out.

EXT - PARK - SAME DAY

Several people sun bathe on long beach towels in the sunny patches of the park. A man plays catch-frisbee with his shaggy dog. A family sits in the shade, eating a picnic lunch. Sandy walks to a bench near her car, talking to himself.

SANDY

Wait to I tell Chelsey. This proves it... a spray paint hit.
Oh, they're out there all right. Speeding around in those wagons of death. Lucky I didn't get into a wreck with those Cindy wanna-be's. Weird costume.

Sandy sits down at the isolated end of the park in the shade. She looks around to see if anyone has noticed her talking to herself.

SANDY

Will you stop talking to yourself. Pretty soon you'll be looking for a nice shopping cart and picking up stray cats.

The Skirts walk across the park some distance from Sandy. They walk in single file, still chanting. Sandy hears the Skirts, looks up, and jumps behind a tree to hide from them.

SANDY

(in disbelief)
The Cindy's. What are they doing here?

Sandy follows the women after they pass, running from tree to tree for cover. She jumps over sunbathers and picnickers in route to the nearest trees.

SKIRTS

(chanting)

Do not kill, sign the bill...

INT - CHURCH BASEMENT OFFICE - SAME DAY

Large windows and the open office door reveal an attached meeting hall outside the office. The small room contains a metal desk where MARCIE, late 30's, dressed in Skirt uniform, with hair pulled back in a barrette, and glasses, sits typing. A large bulletin board is mounted on the wall behind her. It is labeled "HIT BOARD." Pasted to the top of the board is a picture of Alysha Thomas. A black "X" has been spray painted through the picture. Below her picture, Penny Pinkerton's is posted. The two pictures fill only the top portion of the board and the remainder of the board is open for more pictures. An open window well is next to the board and a fan blows from the corner. Three young children play with toys in a play-pen in the opposite corner. Patricia enters shaking a roll of film in its black container.

PATRICIA

(in high, overly maternal voice)

Here Marcie dear, the latest for the board. It's that reporter. We'll teach her to say such harsh things about our little group.

Patricia sits on Marcie's desk and picks up the days issue of "The Morning Star." She looks over Sandy's story with the headline: "Anti-Fem Underground Strikes Rally."

PATRICIA

Did you read this story, Marcie dear? It makes us sound like we're we're common murderers.

MARCIE

Well, aren't you?

PATRICIA

Heavens no. We're not common criminals. We're... we're saviors. We're purging the filth of this soiled nation. This is for the benefit of all women, for the benefit of the world (spreading her arms to express the magnitude of her vision). We need to cleanse our sacred nation. And when it's pure again, we can all nestle down in America's bosom as sisters.

MARCIE

(sarcastically)

So you're not a murderer, you're a purger. And you're going to kill that reporter for the benefit of the world?

PATRICIA

We have to. We need to be inconspicuous, (stalks around the desk past the children in demonstration) like a shadow. We move in, we move out, and we're gone. That's the way it worked with Thomas.

MARCIE

(playing with Patricia)

Does this mean your going to kill the person who writes the obituaries too?

PATRICIA

(freezes with fear)

What do you mean, dear?

MARCIE

Check it out yourself. Says Alysha Thomas was killed at yesterday's rally.

PATRICIA

(frantically searching through the paper)

Where?

MARCIE

It's listed in the back.

PATRICIA

(stares in disbelief as she finds the obituaries)

Goodness gracious. The Homewrecker gets two articles. Who wrote this? We can't let this sort of thing go unpunished. How come there's no by-line? Who wrote this?

MARCIE

(annoyed)

How should I know?

PATRICIA

(tosses the paper at Marcie and stomps out of the office, yelling) Roxanne. Roxanne, did you read the obituaries? We've got to do something about this.

Marcie watches in contempt as Patricia leaves. She then looks to the paper which lies on her desk, open to the obituaries. She picks up the paper and clips Alysha Thomas's obituary out of the paper. She takes it to the Hit Board and staples it next to

Thomas's picture.

EXT - CHURCH - SAME DAY

It is a small brick church with a steeple. Two "Goodwill" drop-off bins stand in the back parking lot where three brown, late 70's station wagons are parked near the church. A garage is attached to the rear of the church near the "Goodwill" bins. A large garage door opens and the single file line of the Skirts enter silently. The protest signs hang over their shoulders. Tired of holding the signs, they toss them in a stack on the floor. Sandy hides in the shrubbery that borders the parking lot until the garage door closes. She then sneaks to the door and peeks in.

INT - CHURCH GARAGE

A brown station wagon with a couple of bullet holes in the back door and a plastic sheet taped in the back window is parked among the "Goodwill" items. The donations include stacks of old clothing, furniture, appliances, bicycles, and a lawn mower.

EXT - CHURCH

Sandy continues sneaking around the building, peeking in windows.

INT - CHURCH BASEMENT, MEETING HALL - SAME DAY

The brick room with tile floor has a couple sunken windows which are open. An American flag listlessly hangs in the corner as there is no breeze. Next to it, a map of the ERA Today's VFW Hall drawn in magic marker on white butcher paper, is posted on the wall. Spiritual posters with scripture printed on them along with crayon drawings from Sunday school children adorn the walls. The Skirts sit at a round wooden table, fanning themselves in the heat. They nibble cake and cookies from white paper dessert plates with plastic forks. Large platters of cookies, a sliced angel food cake, and a pitcher of lemonade sit in the middle of the table. Patricia sits in the chair in front of the map. All are dressed in Skirt uniform except for CHRISTINE, 30's, who wears blue jeans, T-shirt, and tennis shoes. She has short hair which exposes her gaudy gold hoop ear rings.

JENNIFER

(wearing a large gold cross around her neck)

All right ladies, I call this meeting to order. First off, I'd like to thank everyone for their donations to yesterday's bake sale. Our profit was (confirming the total in her notes) \$54.86.

Patricia, bored with the topic, rests her head on one hand and with the other, lightly taps her long sculptured fingernails on the table.

JENNIFER

(pointing to the platters)

As you can see from the leftovers, the angel food cake did not sell very well. But we did extremely well with the brownies and especially the chocolate chip cookies.

Patricia taps her fingernails louder in annoyance.

JENNIFER

(absorbed in her cookie sales analysis)

My guess is that it's because these are long standing favorites. You know, I can't seem to resist either of these myself. So if we could have more of these for tomorrow...

PATRICIA

(annoyed, cuts Jennifer short)

Fascinating marketing report, Jennifer dear. But I think we have more important things to consider. First, I'd like to congratulate all of you for the success of the operation. But there is the issue of that reporter...

JENNIFER

(boldly cutting in)

If I am not mistaken, you use part of my bake sale profit for your little maneuvers.

PATRICIA

(stops to address Jennifer in an exaggerated, elongated reply)

So.

JENNIFER

(pleased with herself)

Then don't be so snippy. (nods once in authority)

PATRICIA

(sighs and rolls her eyes)

Of course Jennifer dear. Back to the reporter. Her picture and information will be posted later this afternoon. Keep it neat ladies, (surveys the women) I don't have to remind you that we don't need any more press. Which brings up another point. Did you know that Homewrecker got listed twice?

ROXANNE

(indignantly)

That's outrageous. Where?

PATRICIA

(outraged)

In the obituaries. We need to find out who writes those obituaries and make them stop it. (stops talking as she looks to Christine) I thought you were going to stop wearing those clothes of... of

sin. You look like a Homewrecker, Christine dear.

CHRISTINE

I never agreed. And don't think I will. I wouldn't be caught dead in that little uniform of yours.

PATRICIA

(still speaking in an overly maternal voice)

I need not remind you that we are an organization. We need cooperation in everything we do. We're Sisters, remember dear?

CHRISTINE

(sarcastically)

We're supposed to be working for the bill, not on my wardrobe. And judging from yours, I don't think I need any help from you.

PATRICIA

I would think you would be concerned with more than the bill. We are going to revolutionize the entire world. Bring women back to being women. We are the only ones who can revive good old-fashioned values. Christine dear, women who wear pants don't cross their legs.

CHRISTINE

So. Crossing your legs isn't the issue. The bill Patricia. Remember the bill?

PATRICIA

Perhaps it's time you should try, dear.

CHRISTINE

(deliberately)

Perhaps if you didn't, Harry wouldn't have left you for another woman.

The remainder of the women who were previously silent now stir around asking for more cake and lemonade. They act as though they didn't hear the comment.

JENNIFER

(making the sign of the cross, whispering to herself)

Blessed Holy Virgin, forgive this child...

PATRICIA

(offended, but uses the moment to go off on her speech)

I was not at fault. (dramatically) I raised his children, kept his house and was always there for him. It wasn't his fault either. It was that

Homewrecker. She pranced before him, flaunting her sex.

ROXANNE

You think Harry was dragged away by that chick, screaming and kicking. He ran after her without looking back. They're all the same. My old man ran after some bitch that worked at a candy store for God's sakes. Left me with a pile of bills and all his dirty laundry.

PATRICIA

Harry wouldn't have left if it weren't for that temptress.

ROXANNE

Well he did and he's been gone for three years now. Get over it, girl.

PATRICIA

(dramatically)

I will not get over it. The day Harry left, I vowed to make a difference, to change what went wrong, to make this world safe for all its children.

CHRISTINE

(sarcastically)

That's beautiful.

JENNIFER

Dear Lord, bless this woman with the wisdom to guide us through this task in reclaiming your lost sheep and give us the courage to fulfill our duty, Amen.

INT - CHURCH OFFICE - SAME DAY

Marcie checks the children who play with toys in the play-pen. The voices of the bickering women can be heard in the office through the open door. Sandy peers down the window well into the office. Her head can be seen through the window. Marcie leaves to join the meeting and Sandy jumps down into the window well.

INT - CHURCH MEETING HALL

PATRICIA

(standing at the map, pointing with a wooden pointer)

O.K. ladies, this is the big plan. You'll be stationed around the building while Roxanne and I are on the inside. (notices Marcie's entrance) All done with the newsletter, Marcie dear? Thanks so much. Have a cookie.

MARCIE

(seated, holds the hem of her skirt up over the table)
See. It's plaid. And I promise to keep my legs crossed.

INT - CHURCH OFFICE

(voice over) Sandy hides behind the desk, poking her head around towards the door to hear the conversation in the meeting hall.

PATRICIA

(unsure of Marcie's motives)

So I see. Well, we could use an extra driver, dear. Both teams will start at the front as we enter from the rear. Christine and Sherry will head the teams.

INT - CHURCH MEETING HALL

PATRICIA

(dramatically holding her arm up where a Swatch is strapped)
Synchronize your watches, dears. It's now 1:30.

INT - CHURCH OFFICE

Sandy checks her watch as one child in the play-pen takes a stuffed animal by the leg and starts hitting another in the face.

INT - CHURCH MEETING HALL

PATRICIA

We meet at... midnight.

The beaten child's screams are heard from the office. Marcie gets up to check on them.

PATRICIA

Thank you so much, Marcie dear.

INT - CHURCH OFFICE

Sandy scrambles back out the window, having some difficulty getting her legs up as she lays on her stomach squirming. She catches one leg on the ledge and then makes it out the window. Marcie enters and picks up the child to comfort it.

MARCIE

Now why can't you play nicely, hmmm?

INT - NEWSPAPER, GENERAL REPORTERS' OFFICE - SAME DAY

Sandy bustles to her desk, an obsessively clean desk amidst the other desks heaped with papers. A picture of Chelsey and her boyfriend FREDDY, 30's, long unstyled hair,

and several ear rings in both ears, is framed on her desk along with a coffee mug filled with pens, a telephone, and a computer terminal. She flips on the terminal, pulls out her notes, and begins typing.

SANDY

(talks to herself while typing)

Oh, yeah. Henderson will just love this one. He's going to take his cigarette and shove it right through my heart. Then I'll be in the obituaries.

RICK

(slides into Sandy with his rolling chair, bumping her from the keyboard)

Hey Babe.

SANDY

(glares at him)

I'm not your Babe.

RICK

(puts his arm around her shoulder)

Sorry, Hon. I forgot you're a real woman.

SANDY

(knocks Rick's hand off her shoulder)

Really Rick. I don't have time for this. I need to get this story out.

RICK

(putting his arm around the back of her chair)

That's what I've come to talk about.

SANDY

Just lay off. I don't need anymore of your jokes today. Goodbye.

RICK

(attempting to be sincere)

No jokes. I see you work hard all day. Old Man Henderson gives you a hard time, the guys ride you, and well, me too. What I'm trying to say is that I'd like to take you out tonight to make up for things.

SANDY

(stops typing, swivels towards him and looks him in the eyes)

Please. You're married. Remember? The station wagon?

RICK

(not phased)
So? I have a station wagon and from what I hear, you get into them.
(jutting his elbow at her)

SANDY
(stops typing)
And just what else have you heard?

RICK
(thinking he's making progress and is having a legitimate conversation)
Well, there's a lot of talk about you not having a man. You know, guys start wondering when a woman who looks like you...

SANDY
(pushes him away)
Never mind. Get. Get away from me. I can't deal with you now.

RICK
(pushing himself on his chair backwards with his feet)
All right. But don't think you can keep me away forever.

SANDY
(continues typing and then stops)
Wait. You said you have a station wagon.

RICK
(stops propelling backwards)
Yep. A brown one. And it's got a really big back seat.

SANDY
Pick me up at 11:30 at The Jungle Bar. Know where that is?

RICK
Funky place with all the vines on stage. Yah-Hooh. I'll be there.

SANDY
(turning to her typing)
Don't be late. And make sure you bring the wagon.

INT - CHURCH OFFICE - SAME DAY

Marcie staples Sandy's photo at the government building on the Hit Board below Penny Pinkerton's.

MARCIE
Guess your next, (imitating Patricia) dear.

EXT - WAREHOUSE - SAME DAY

The warehouse is located in a deserted industrial park. The city lies a couple miles in the distance. A brown station wagon approaches the building. A large automatic door opens and the station wagon drives in.

INT - WAREHOUSE

Shipping crates and boxes line the walls and form aisles in the block-long building. A forklift and several military jeeps are parked in a row, forming one aisle. LARRY, 40's, dressed in military fatigues and a crew cut, walks from the automatic door to the station wagon. He opens the door and helps Jennifer out.

LARRY

Good day, Jennifer.

JENNIFER

Good day to you too, Larry. You're always so polite.

LARRY

What can I get for you today?

JENNIFER

(handing him a wad of mostly singles)

Well first off, I have the last \$50 we owe you for the guns.

Here you are. Now Patricia would like make another order. She says our guns are the same size as the Homewreckers and she wants something bigger.

LARRY

(smiling)

Like what? A machine gun.

JENNIFER

Will it be bigger than what we have now?

LARRY

(laughing)

Yeah. They're a little bit bigger all right?

JENNIFER

Well, then that's what we want. Sixteen of them.

LARRY

I seldom ask my customers this because it is none of my business, but what are you planning to do with machine guns.

JENNIFER

The Lord only knows. I'm only the treasurer. You know Patricia and her plans. You can get them, then?

LARRY

Yeah. But its going to take some cash.

JENNIFER

(counting the remainder of the bake sale funds)

Let's see. I have \$4.86 left over. (hands it to him) I know it's not nearly enough, but it's a start. Now I must get back and start making more cookies.

LARRY

(helps Jennifer back in the car and closes the door for her)
It's going to take a lot of cookies.

JENNIFER

(through the open window)

The Lord knows it will. But I'm only the treasurer. Patricia's in charge. I just try to cover my accounts the best I can.

LARRY

I'm sure you do. Good day, Jennifer.

Larry walks to the door and pulls the lever that opens it. Jennifer backs out of the warehouse.

INT - VFW HALL - SAME DAY

The center table of the room is covered with boxes of black uniforms and boots. The ERA Today women are gathered around the table, slipping into the uniforms. Mabel, in uniform, walks authoritatively around, helping the women with the uniforms. Betsy stands behind the table taking boots out of boxes and handing them to the women. Penny, dressed in uniform, proudly overseeing the scene.

PENNY

Now that you're dressed for action, you're ready for action. No more stupid speeches. No more silly signs. We're hardcore now.

SHARON

Where's this supposed to go?

Sharon, dressed in black uniform and stocking footed, holds a gun and holster awkwardly. Mabel rushes over to Sharon, pointing to her properly attached holster with gun in place.

MABEL

(models her holster)

This is the best part. Just strap it around your leg like this , and it's instant access (pulls gun out quickly and aims) Yeah, what a rush.

Penny and Letticia, both dressed in uniform, walk to the coat room located near the front door.

PENNY

I've been thinking about bringing in someone from the outside. A professional.

LETTICIA

Who?

INT - COAT ROOM

The small room has tile floor, fluorescent lighting and no windows. A door at the back of the room opens to an office. Coat racks on wheels are crammed against each other. Old rusty coat hangers hang on the racks.

PENNY

(coldly)

Larry.

LETTICIA

Are you sure about this? How long's it been since you've seen him?

Penny flips the coat hangers to one side of a coat rack with a single sweep of her arm, jumps on the rack and does chin-ups with little difficulty.

PENNY

Six years. I did see him once after he got out. He's still got the equipment and the contacts.

LETTICIA

(nodding reassuringly)

We could use him.

PENNY

I know.

LETTICIA

But can we afford him?

PENNY

I think I could work out some sort of deal.

EXT - "THE MORNING STAR" BUILDING - EARLY EVENING

The four story stone building has the paper's name above the revolving door. Sandy and Chelsey push through the door and then walk up the street to where Sandy's car is parked on the same block. The car is still marked with the "P" sign.

CHELSEY

Freddy's going to read some of his new poetry tonight.

SANDY

(walks around the back of her car, digging for her keys in her purse)

Let me guess, something about monkeys.

CHELSEY

(standing at the passenger door)

Of course. He says everything has to do with monkeys. He wants to get one for the bar even.

Patricia's station wagon with the plastic sheet still taped in the back window speeds towards Sandy as she steps into the street next to her car, jiggling her purse for her keys. Finding them, she looks behind her as she hears the howling engine of the approaching station wagon. She jumps behind her car, falling on the ground as Patricia's wagon swerves, but misses her. The wagon continues swerving down the road.

INT - STATION WAGON

Patricia is dressed in uniform. She pants and some of her hair is falling out of the bun.

PATRICIA

(in evil voice)

Homewrecker, I'll get you next time. (hideous laugh)

EXT - STREET

Patricia's evil laughter lingers.

CHELSEY

(scurries around the car to Sandy)

Sandy, dear God. You O.K.? I'll take you to the hospital.

Sandy crawls around the car to see the fleeing station wagon as it corners widely with a large screeching noise.

SANDY

See. See. I told you they're everywhere. That's the same one I

chased this morning. (turns to Chelsey who fusses over her)
They must be after me now. (pulls Chelsey down behind the car)
Get down. There might be more. Did she yell something at me? I
heard her say something.

CHELSEY

(getting up and pulling the squirming Sandy with her, trying to
calm her down)
I didn't hear anything. She's just a crazy housewife who shouldn't
have a driver's license.

SANDY

(jumping up and down in frustration)
No. No. I heard her. She yelled something at me.

CHELSEY

You're imagining things. It was nothing, dear.

INT - THE JUNGLE BAR - NIGHT

The bar is in the lower level of the building. Metal bars protect the few windows where
feet and light from traffic can be seen. Opposite the door is a stage where FREDDY
sits on a wooden stool, wearing fatigues, old combat boots and a flannel shirt with
another flannel shirt tied around his waist. He reads poems from a large black book
into a microphone. A pin-ball machine silently flashes in the corner. A jukebox stands
next to it, murmuring blues music. There are a few beer mirrors on the walls, but
mostly they are barren. The bar is dim as there are no neon signs or lights. The
costumers sit around square wobbly chairs. The majority of the customers are hippies,
biker dudes, alternatives, and acid heads.

FREDDY

A monkey is a monkey is a monkey is me
If only we had more trees
There's some by the streets
And some in the park
But , oh how very few in my heart.

A couple of pseudointellectual types dressed in baggy dull clothing, long hair, and
coke bottle glasses sit near the stage. They clap and whistle at Freddy's poetry. The
remainder of the customers do not pay attention to Freddy.

PSEUDOINTELLECTUAL 1

The simplicity of this piece indicates its magnitude.

PSEUDOINTELLECTUAL 2

Exactly.

PSEUDOINTELLECTUAL 1

Hey Freddy, read "The Monkey in Me." That's the greatest piece ever.

FREDDY

(looks up and smiles at the request, sees Chelsey and Sandy enter)

How about a little later.

Chelsey, dressed in a loose skirt with a large flower print and jean jacket walks to the far end of the bar, near the stage. Sandy, dressed in a plaid knee length skirt, knee socks, white blouse, and saddle shoes follows self-consciously. She hangs on to the large bag that hangs over her shoulder with both hands. They sit on the last two stools.

FREDDY

(walks to them and kisses Chelsey)

Hey Babe. (nods at Sandy) Funky clothes, Sandy. What's the occasion?

CHELSEY

She's doing a little undercover work tonight.

FREDDY

(walks behind the bar and lights a Camels cigarette)

Cool. Bet it's something wacky by that get up.

SANDY

Wacky? I'll tell you what's wacky. Somebody tattooing your car and then trying to run you down in the street. Now, that's what I call wacky. This. Well this is just plain dumb. A plaid skirt. I can't believe I'm actually wearing plaid. If only my mother could see me now.

FREDDY

(gets three Budweisers, pours two in mugs for Sandy and Chelsey, and drinks his from the bottle)

Let's drink. How'd you like that poem? I just wrote it this morning.

Chelsey nods her head in response as she lights a cigarette.

SANDY

(drinking slowly)

This is what it all comes down to. I have a date with Rick. He's everything I hate in a man, wrapped up in polyester and tied in a gold chain.

FREDDY

If you can't stand the dude, then why are you going out with him?

SANDY

Because he has a station wagon.

FREDDY

(nods as if he understands)

Oh.

Freddy walks down the bar to make drinks for some customers.

CHELSEY

Are you sure about this?

SANDY

(rolling her eyes)

Oh sure. Rick and I will make a great couple. I can just feel it. And maybe later, after we've been going together for awhile, he'll take me home to meet his wife.

CHELSEY

You know what I mean.

SANDY

Yeah, I know what you mean. But, what else can I do? I need to find out what's going on before I'm found in the middle of the street, flattened by a hit and run station wagon.

CHELSEY

Have you thought about going to the police?

SANDY

Yeah. Right. Nothing would please me more than being labeled "The Crackpot of the Week." I'll be the hot topic at the Policeman's Annual picnic.

CHELSEY

Guess it does sound pretty wild.

SANDY

I know it does. You should of heard Henderson yesterday. He sounded like my father, (mimicking her father) "Don't be a reporter, sweetheart. You won't be treated with respect. People'll walk right over you." Daddy always said the only useful part of the

newspaper was the obituaries. He said death was the only thing people really cared about.

CHELSEY

My mother was the same way. She used to look through the obituaries every morning for names she knew. If she found one, she'd clip it out and hang it on the refrigerator by one of those plastic magnets. She would always hang the clippings under the plastic pineapple magnet. I kept telling her that a pineapple wasn't a proper fruit for mourning. She never listened to me.

INT - CHURCH MEETING HALL - SAME NIGHT

The table is covered with Tupperware and paper plates of chocolate chip cookies and brownies covered in Saran Wrap. A single angel food cake on a glass platter sits at the end of the table. Jennifer walks around the table taking inventory of the donations and recording it on a clipboard. She stops at the angel food cake and frowns at it.

JENNIFER

Who brought you, angel food cake?

She lifts the plate to see if a name has been written on the bottom.

JENNIFER

Oh pooh, no name. (talking to the cake) Who brought you? (stares at it defiantly) Answer me. (pokes it with her pen creating a hole) Come on, answer me, cake. (pokes it again) O.K., I'll just find out who brought you by the process of elimination. (runs her finger down the clipboard, muttering names) Marcie always brings chocolate chip, Sherry brought brownies, Roxanne, Patricia, hmm? This does no good. Who brought you? God dammit. (smashes the cake with her clipboard several times, flattening it) Who brought you. Why are you here? Who brought you?

EXT - CITY HALL - SAME NIGHT

Several flights of stone steps lead up to the building. Two large lions stand proudly at opposite sides of the entrance. Cars hurriedly pass by in route to their evenings plans on the street before the building. MAXINE, dressed in ERA Today uniform and wearing a black baseball hat, sneaks from behind a lion and slides near its head. She takes a can of scarlet spray paint from the gun holster strapped to her leg and sprays a " " sign on its chest. On the side of the building, Sherry is carefully printing in black spray paint, "Let's All Play Together In Plaid." She stands back and admires her work and then sneaks to the front of the building. Not noticing Maxine, she stands in front of the wall, thinking about what to write. Maxine finishes spraying a "♀" sign on the second lion's chest, puts the can in its holster and slips alongside the lion towards the building. She stops short as she sees Sherry writing "Plaid is Beautiful" on the wall.

Maxine smiles and grabs her spray can out of its holster and sneaks behind Sherry. Maxine begins to spray a "P" sign on her back.

SHERRY

Good Lord, I can explain officer. (turns around, even more scared)
Oh. You're one of them. I ... Uh...

MAXINE

(resumes spraying the "P" sign on Sherry's front)
Stand still you Plaid-Lover. I hope this teaches you how to dress.

SHERRY

(not moving as she's being painted)
Oh, dear me. What are you doing that for?

MAXINE

(finishes the sign)
I'm leaving our mark. Take that back to your plaid-loving leader and tell her that plaid sucks.

SHERRY

(enraged by the comment, aims her can at Maxine)
How dare you? I've got a few comments for your homewrecking leader myself. Let's see. (stops to ponder what to write)

MAXINE

Oh yeah?

SHERRY

(boldly)
Yeah. How about this? (starts to spray)

MAXINE

(runs towards the lion statue)
Got to catch me first, Skirt.

Maxine grabs on to the lion's tail and pulls herself onto its back. Sherry runs after her and tries to get on the lion to spray paint her. Every time Sherry gets near the lion, Maxine sprays her hair with the scarlet paint.

SHERRY

That's not fair, you got to spray me.

MAXINE

O.K. I'll wait until you get up here.

Sherry sticks the can of paint in her purse and grabs the lion's tail with both hands. As, she struggles to get on the lion, Maxine jumps off and runs beneath Sherry and pulls her skirt down.

SHERRY

Oh my God. What are you doing? You stay away from me. Do you hear me?

Maxine runs away towards the back of the building, laughing. Sherry drops to the ground and frantically pulls her skirt back up.

SHERRY

(shouting after Maxine)

We'll get you, you... you Homewrecker.

INT - THE JUNGLE BAR - SAME NIGHT

Rick enters the bar, suspiciously eying its customers. He wears tan polyester pants that are too tight, a half open button down shirt that exposes a thick gold chain. His hair is slicked back and glistens with gel. He eyes a table of alternatives, especially a man wearing a black leather jacket, baggy plaid pants, and his hair dyed purple in a mohawk.

RICK

(muttering to himself)

God damn fags.

SANDY

(notices Rick's entrance)

Oh God.

CHELSEY

Ready for this?

SANDY

(slugs back the last of her beer)

Well, I'm dressed for it, aren't I?

Rick hops on the stool next to Sandy, drums his hands on the bar, and looks over his shoulder at the people in the bar.

RICK

Sandy, Doll, this is some joint. And those are some set of threads. But I like 'em. (jabbing her with his elbow)

SANDY

(turning to Chelsey)

He's so smooth.

RICK

When I first saw you at work, I knew there was more to you than writing stories. I knew you were a real partying babe.

SANDY

Did you bring the wagon?

RICK

Whooh-wee. You like to get down to business don't you. I could tell that about you. I sure did bring the wagon. (jabbing her with his elbow) And I even cleaned the back seat. Thought you'd be more comfortable back there.

Freddy returns from serving customers. He is drinking a Budweiser. He eyes Rick and then looks to Chelsey for an explanation to the situation.

RICK

(notices Freddy, awkwardly greets him)

How's it going, dude? (putting his arm around Sandy) You a friend of this babe, too?

FREDDY

Yeah.

SANDY

(looks at her watch)

Let's go or we'll be late.

Sandy grabs Rick's hand and pulls him after her.

RICK

Whatever you say.

CHELSEY

Call me when you get home. I'll be here for the rest of the night.

RICK

(trailing after Sandy)

I thought we could take a little drive through the city and then maybe go to the park and check out the stars.

SANDY

I've got a better idea.

Rick and Sandy leave the bar.

FREDDY

Man. He's a Lester if I ever saw one. (goes back on stage)

PSEUDOINTELLECTUAL 1

All right man. Let's hear some more of that wicked verse.

FREDDY

(pulls the microphone close)

O.K. This is the one I promised you guys. It's called "The Monkey in Me."

INT - CHURCH MEETING HALL - SAME NIGHT

Jennifer sits at the table, writing cookie prices on masking tape and sticking them on the Saran Wrap as price tags. The smashed angel food cake still sits at the end of the table. Patricia enters the room.

PATRICIA

Well Jennifer dear, are you ready for some action tonight?

JENNIFER

(looks up annoyed)

Shhhhh. I'm working.

PATRICIA

Of course dear. Don't want to break the old concentration.
(eyes the donations and then notices the cake) What happened to that?

JENNIFER

(looks up, realizes the cake is still there, stalls)

What's what? Just pricing these so you can have money for your...
(notices Sherry enter)

Sherry drags in the meeting hall with her hair spray painted scarlet and drips of paint running from her hair down her face. The front of her blouse has the " " sign on it.

JENNIFER

(shoves the cake off the table)

Dear God. What happened to you Sherry?

PATRICIA

(turns to see Sherry, then back to Jennifer as she hears the cake and glass plate fall to the ground)

How could you let them catch you?

SHERRY

(pathetically)

I didn't even know she was there. She sneaked up behind me and attacked me.

JENNIFER

(as Sherry and Patricia talk, she ducks her head under the table and talks to the cake)

Don't think that little stunt you pulled will gain any attention. They won't even remember you were here. Nobody pays any attention to angel food cakes. And least of all, at bake sales. Everyone knows angel food cake doesn't sell well. (sits back up and continues pricing the items)

PATRICIA

For goodness sakes, clean yourself up before we mobilize.

We can't go anywhere with your hair looking like that.

They'll see us coming a mile away. For heaven's sake. I've got a million things to do that are more important. Like finding out who writes the obituaries. But instead, I have to follow you dears around like your little children. It's amazing we get anything done at all.

SHERRY

(protesting as she walks away)

I was just writing on the wall. This wasn't called for. Just look at my hair. This'll never come out.

PATRICIA

(turns back to Jennifer)

I wanted to know what happened to my... (notices the cake is gone)

Never mind. (walks to office) Oh Marcie dear.

INT - CHURCH OFFICE - SAME NIGHT

Marcie is not at her desk. The children sleep on a cot in the corner that has been surrounded by chairs in a make-shift crib. Patricia enters and notices the obituary clipping tacked to the board. She goes over to see what it is and utters a sigh of annoyance as she discovers it is the clipping.

PATRICIA

She just doesn't understand how horrible this really is.

Patricia sits at the desk and starts flipping through the days edition of "The Morning Star" that still lies on the desk. She flips the pages viciously, looking for clues about the writer of the obituaries.

PATRICIA

If she ever did anything with us, she'd understand. Sits around all day writing useless newsletters. Who reads them anyways? And who writes the God damn obituaries. Doesn't every story have a by-line. Those reporters are all ego-maniacs. They want their name on everything. Why isn't it here?

Patricia throws the newspaper across the room in frustration and stomps out of the office.

PATRICIA

I will find out who writes them.

INT - RICK'S CAR

Sandy and Rick are parked along the street a little way back from the church parking lot.

RICK

(arm on the seat, looking back at Sandy)
So what's this surprise you were talking about?

SANDY

(sitting in the back seat, feeling awkward in her costume,
and concentrating out the window)
Well, it's kind of like a game of follow the leader.

RICK

And who should I follow?

SANDY

(pointing at the Skirts)
Them.

EXT - CHURCH

The garage door is open and the Skirts, dressed in uniform, carry gasoline tanks, boards and other equipment to the station wagons. Patricia stands in the open garage door, barking orders as the women move about loading the station wagons. Sherry meekly walks past Patricia. She has changed her blouse and washed her face, but her hair is still matted with the scarlet paint.

PATRICIA

Sherry dear, would you come here one moment please?

SHERRY

(slinks back to Patricia)

Yes Patricia.

PATRICIA

(touching Sherry's hair and then pulling her hand back in disgust)

I thought you were going to do something with your hair.

SHERRY

(sadly)

I tried. It won't come out.

PATRICIA

(shaking her head, displeased)

Well you can't go looking like that, dear. How about a hat?

SHERRY

I don't have one.

PATRICIA

Oh for goodness sakes. Do I have to do everything for you?

We'll never get anywhere if I don't.

Patricia walks into the garage and pulls a plaid skirt from the "Goodwill" donations. She walks back to Sherry and slides the skirt over her head, the waist band serving as a headband. Sherry looks like she is wearing a plaid nun's habit.

PATRICIA

This will just have to do. Now just hold still. You look divine.

And not a bit of that nasty scarlet.

INT - RICK'S CAR

RICK

O.K. I get it. You're trying to get me back for the station wagon joke. Maybe it was out of line, but that's behind us now. And besides, we're here together. You went to all this trouble for me. I just knew you had a soft spot for me.

SANDY

(annoyed)

I didn't set this up.

EXT - CHURCH

Patricia closes the garage door and the women get into the station wagons, four women to a wagon.

INT - RICK'S CAR

RICK

You think I'm going to believe this? That grown women wear knee socks? They look like Cindy Brady for Christ's sakes. (turns to Sandy who doesn't respond as she anxiously watches the Skirts) O.K. You got me. (laughs) Had me convinced for a minute the way you were sitting there watching them. You're a real actress. That's what I said the first time I saw you. I said, "She doesn't belong here typing dull news stories. She's a star, a real Broadway Babe."

EXT - CHURCH

The station wagons begin leaving the parking lot in a convoy.

INT - RICK'S STATION WAGON

SANDY

Drive.

RICK

What for?

SANDY

They're leaving. Join the end of the convoy and maybe they won't notice us.

RICK

I said I was on to you, honey. Now how about I get in the back seat with you? Wouldn't you like that much better?

SANDY

(gets out and opens the driver's door)
How about I come up here instead?

RICK

(sliding over)
That's just as good. (leans to the radio) Why don't we start with some tunes.

SANDY

(slams the door and drives)
How about not?

EXT - STREET BEFORE THE CHURCH

Sandy joins the end of the convoy.

INT - VFW HALL - SAME NIGHT

Penny, dressed in uniform, stands aside Larry who holds a handgun. They both face the twelve other women, all dressed in uniform, who stand behind a row of tables where a handgun lies before each woman. Mabel and Betsy stand on opposite ends of the line at attention. Two children play with blocks against the wall at the back of the room and a portable cradle holds a sleeping infant.

PENNY

All right ladies, Larry's going to show us what we need to know for Friday's offensive. Since a few dedicated members along with myself have already begun our training, we will head the operation. The remainder of you will serve as drivers and back-up.

MANDY

Why do we need guns if we're only driving?

PENNY

Just because you're driving doesn't mean you won't see any action. Preparation, ladies. That's the key. What would you tell your children if you had a chance to fight and you couldn't because you weren't prepared?

SHARON

What will I tell him if I did?

PENNY

(dramatically)

That you were one of a small rebel group fighting for what America took from you. That you fought for them. Remember, the only good Skirt is a dead Skirt.

MABEL

Amen, sister.

LETTICIA

It's time to show them what we're made of.

MABEL

(twirling her gun on her finger)
Rock-n-Roll.

PENNY

All right ladies, let's do it.

LARRY

This type of handgun is semi-automatic, which means...

EXT - VFW HALL - SAME NIGHT

A few cars are parked in the VFW Hall parking lot located in front of the building. Lights are on in the back windows of the building. The station wagon convoy pulls into the lot, headlights off, and parks near the front doors. The Skirts get out, grabbing equipment and dispersing around to the back of the building. Sandy drops back and parks alongside the road, a little way back from the VFW Hall.

INT - RICK'S STATION WAGON

RICK

What's going on here?

SANDY

Looks like some sort of raid on the opposition.

RICK

(sullen)

O.K., I'll bite. Who's the opposition?

SANDY

(proud of her insight)

Since Penny Pinkerton loosely identified these Cindy-posers as killing Thomas, I'd say they're after ERA Today.

RICK

So you're saying forces of women mount to kill the hordes of evil women who plague the city. What am I doing here? This is supposed to be a date. My wife's not even this crazy.

SANDY

We need to find out what's going on here. Maybe Henderson will believe me if I had a witness. (pulls a wig, skirt, and knee socks out of her bag)

RICK

We. Uh-uh. I knew something was up when you said to bring the wagon. It's bad enough you tricked me into coming to this PMS battlefield. When I first met you at work, I knew you were a tease.

SANDY

I need your help. This is a real story. I don't care about the by-line. I need to know what's going on.

RICK

(becoming defensive)

I'm not cross-dressing for a promotion.

SANDY

Please help me.

RICK

No.

SANDY

Help me or else.

RICK

(angry)

Or else what?

SANDY

(shakes the wig and skirt)

Or else I'll tell all the guys at work about how you couldn't perform in the back seat tonight.

RICK

You wouldn't.

SANDY

(nods seriously)

And about how we went back to The Jungle Bar where you picked up one of those special customers. Know what I mean?

RICK

(getting scared)

You mean one of those fags?

SANDY

(smiles)

Yep.

RICK

They'll never believe you.

SANDY

Oh, I think I can convince them with the help of Chelsey's eye witness testimony.

RICK

You wouldn't.

SANDY
I'm a desperate woman, Doll.

EXT - VFW HALL

Patricia and Roxanne, each holding two cans of gasoline and slinging large purses stuffed full of wire and other equipment, slip in the front door. Christine, dressed in black jeans and blouse, and Sherry, still wearing the plaid skirt over her hair, slide a board through the protruding door handles to lock the door. They then split and go opposite ways around the building to the two teams of Skirts. The teams pour gasoline over the bushes dried from the summer heat and spray gasoline on the walls. Boards are slid through the door handles of the side and back doors. The two teams work their way back towards the front of the building and the parking lot.

EXT - STATION WAGON

Sandy leans her back against the front door of the station wagon. Rick can be seen struggling with his clothes in the front seat.

SANDY
(anxiously)
Will you hurry up.

RICK
I don't want to hear any more demands from you. Got it?

SANDY
All right. But let's go while they're behind the building.

Rick's legs stick up in the air as he struggles to get his pants off over his shoes.

RICK
God damn it. That's it. I'm not wearing this skirt.

SANDY
Quit whining and let's go.

RICK
(sticks head out open car window)
No. You can't make me do this.

SANDY
(toying with him)
So what's your type, Rick? Blonde or brunette? I know, how about the guy with the mohawk?

RICK
(gets out holding his wig)

All right. Not one word about the way I look.

SANDY

(takes the wig from his hand and puts it on his head)
You look darling.

RICK

That's more than one word. That's it. The deal's off.

Sandy grabs Rick's skirt as he tries to get back in the car.

SANDY

Not so fast sugar. A deal's a deal.

RICK

(submitting)
You're enjoying this way too much.

EXT - VFW HALL PARKING LOT

Sandy leads Rick across the parking lot. As they sneak towards the front door, Rick holds the back of his skirt with one hand as it keeps flying up revealing his boxer shorts. He holds his wig down with the other. Sandy ducks behind the station wagon parked closest to the front door.

RICK

(protesting)
This is as far as I go.

SANDY

(taunting Rick)
Since you're all dressed up, we might as well drop in and say "Hi."

RICK

All right. Enough is enough. I put this costume on. You got your kicks out of it. I'm out of here.

SANDY

You have to help me get inside.

RICK

I'm not helping you. Did you see those Cindy posers? They're carrying torches. They're crazy. I don't even want to think of what they'd do to me if they caught me wearing their threads. You know how women are with clothes. My wife takes anything she wants from my closet, but even get near hers and she throws a fit.

SANDY

(interested)

Just what do you do in your wife's closet?

RICK

(attempting to cover up his secret)

What do you mean? Never mind. Let's go. I'll help you get inside, but that's it. Got it? After that we're even-steven. And I don't want to hear any mention of this at work or I'll tell the guys about you and Henderson's little thing.

SANDY

(unconvinced by Rick's threat)

All right Rick. Your on. Just let me in and put the bar back in case the Cindys come back. Give me five minutes and then open it up again. That's all you have to do. O.K.? Then we're even.

Rick nods in agreement. Rick and Sandy peer around the end of the station wagon and then move to the front door of the VFW Hall.

INT - VFW HALL OFFICE

Patricia and Roxanne move through the coat room to the office where Patricia pours gasoline on papers, files, and the walls. Roxanne looks through the door opening to the back of the main hall where the ERA Today women practices. Larry's muffled instructions can be heard in the office.

INT- VFW HALL, MAIN HALL

Larry paces before the women, holding a handgun and explaining its parts.

INT - VFW HALL OFFICE

Roxanne goes out the door at the far end of the office that leads to back stage.

INT - VFW HALL, BACK STAGE

Roxanne sprays gasoline on the curtains.

INT - VFW HALL OFFICE

Patricia puts a full can of gasoline on the desk. She tapes a model rocket engine in the open spout, tapes the igniter to the engine, and clips two wires to the igniter. Patricia stops her work, drops to the floor and crawls to the door. She looks out the door to the practicing women.

INT - VFW HALL, MAIN HALL

The women stand behind the tables as Larry walks behind them, instructing them step by step. Three paper cut-outs of women wearing plaid skirts, knee highs, and saddle shoes hang on the curtain.

LARRY

Slide the clip in until it clicks.

The women load the guns which click simultaneously.

INT - VFW HALL OFFICE

PATRICIA

(shocked)

Well tickle me pink. It's Larry. He's a double agent. And Jennifer let him into our home. Good Lord, he's a Homewrecker too.

Patricia slides angrily away from the door, goes back to the desk, and begins unrolling two rolls of wires towards the coat room. Roxanne backs into the office, unrolling two rolls of wires, following Patricia towards the coat room.

EXT - VFW HALL

Sandy slips inside the front doors. Rick slides the bar back between the handles, checks his watch. Hearing the Skirts returning from the back of the building, he runs and hides behind the station wagon closest to the building.

INT - VFW HALL MAIN HALL

LARRY

Remove the safety.

The women simultaneously remove the safety making a single click.

LARRY

Aim at your target.

The women aim at the paper Skirt targets pinned on the stage.

LARRY

And pull the trigger.

SANDY

(running into the room)

Hey? Let's go. There's no time, the... the Cindys are outside.

The row of women turn and aim at Sandy. Penny walks forward from the middle of the line, confidently holding her gun on Sandy and eying her uniform.

PENNY

What do you think you're doing here?

EXT - VFW HALL

Christine and Sherry stand before the door. The four Skirt drivers run from the side of the building to the station wagons.

EXT - VFW HALL PARKING LOT

Rick slides in the back seat of the station wagon he was hiding behind so the drivers do not see him. The women get into their cars and start the engines. Marcie is the driver of the wagon in which Rick hides.

EXT - VFW HALL

CHRISTINE

(looking at her watch)

One minute. (looks at Sherry's head) What the hell are you wearing that on your head for?

SHERRY

(mumbling)

Well, I was out painting... and Patricia said... never mind.

CHRISTINE

(laughing)

Good old Patricia. She's always the height of fashion.

INT - VFW HALL. MAIN HALL

PENNY

It's that reporter from when Alysha was shot.

Mabel growl and moves closer to Sandy, aiming her gun at her.

INT - VFW HALL. COAT ROOM

Patricia holds a model rocket ignition box with the orange safety key inserted. She looks at her watch.

PATRICIA

(speaking in her evil tone)

Times up. Let's toast those Homewreckers. (turns the key)

INT - VFW HALL. MAIN HALL

The gas cans in the office and back stage explode igniting the curtain and the office. The women scream in fear, but do not move.

PENNY

Enemy attack. Abandon home base. Let's move.

EXT - VFW HALL

The remainder of the Skirts stationed around the building use torches to light the bushes and the walls.

INT - VFW HALL. MAIN HALL

The children scream. Sandy runs over and picks up the portable cradle followed by the mothers of the other two kids.

SANDY

(running to the door)
I've got somebody at the door.

PENNY

All right. This is what we've been training for. We're ready for action. We go out ready to shoot.

MABEL

The first Skirt is mine.

Sandy leads the way followed by Penny, the rest of the Skirts, and then Larry.

INT - STATION WAGON

Rick looks at his watch, unsure of what to do.

EXT - VFW HALL

CHRISTINE

Time.

Christine pulls the board through the handles, unlocking the doors. Sherry covers the door. The remainder of the Skirts run from the side of the building to the wagons. Patricia, followed by Roxanne run out the open door.

PATRICIA

Mission accomplished. Let's bug out.

Roxanne runs to the station wagon next to the one Rick hides in and the back three station wagons leave the lot. Patricia runs towards the remaining wagon where Rick hides.

INT - STATION WAGON

Rick slides out the passenger door opposite the building as Patricia runs towards the wagon to get in. Marcie notices Rick and gets out of the car and chases after him.

MARCIE

Hey. Help. Stow away.

EXT - VFW HALL

Rick runs towards the door with Marcie still chasing him. Patricia scrambles to get out of the car.

PATRICIA

(in evil tone)

Just shoot the Homewrecker.

Rick runs to the door as Sherry intercepts his route and stands blocking his passage.

SHERRY

(faltering, shaking while holding the gun)

Stop or I'll shoot.

RICK

(pushes past)

Yeah, right honey.

Marcie, running with Patricia following, plows into Sherry and knocks her down. Patricia attempts to follow Rick, but the rolling Marcie and Sherry trip her. Rick runs to the door and wrestles with Christine who attempts to slide the beam in place. Rick pushes Christine out of the way and pulls the beam free, unlocking the doors.

CHRISTINE

(aims a gun at Rick)

Stop or you're dead.

RICK

(holding the board)

Whoah. Babe. You wouldn't shoot a guy in a skirt, would you?

CHRISTINE

I might.

Patricia and Sherry run to the building from the parking lot. Marcie runs to start the wagon. Sandy, holding the child, runs out the door along with the armed ERA Today and Larry. The building smolders, but burns little.

CHRISTINE

(grabs Rick from behind and holds as hostage, gun to his head)

Put the board down.

RICK

All right sugar, your the boss.